



PRESS RELEASE

XLVI CONFERENCE OF POLISH MUSEUMS, ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES IN THE WEST

Concludes at the Polish Museum of America

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chicago, IL – October 8, 2024

The Polish Museum of America (PMA) proudly hosted the 46th Conference of Polish Museums, Archives, and Libraries in the West (MAB) from September 24–28, 2024. The event brought together representatives from key Polish cultural institutions across Europe, North and South America, for insightful discussions and cultural exchanges centered on the theme: “National Anniversaries in the Collections of MAB Institutions.”

The conference opened with a welcoming dinner on September 24 at the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (PRCUA) social hall, where guests were greeted by James Robaczewski, President of PRCUA and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the PMA; Richard Owsiany, President of the PMA; and PMA Managing Director Małgorzata Kot. Attendees explored the museum’s exhibitions, including the Great Hall, the Ignacy Jan Paderewski Room, and the Art Gallery.

September 25, 2024 (Wednesday)

On September 25, the conference continued with closed sessions focusing on internal MAB matters, followed by a visit to the historic Holy Trinity Church for a solemn Holy Mass. A special museum tour was arranged for honorary guests, including a delegation from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland, the Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Chicago, and representatives of various state institutions and non-governmental organizations.

The evening featured the official opening of the conference, led by Richard Owsiany, with speeches by James Robaczewski, Micheline Jaminski, Treasurer of the Polish American Congress, as well as Agata Grochowska, Vice Consul and Head of the Department of Polish American Community, Communication and Public Diplomacy at the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Chicago; Julia Konopka-Żołnierczuk from the National Library of Poland; Teresa Ackermann from the Kościuszko Museum in Solothurn; Jolanta Miśkowiec, Director of the Department of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, who also read a special letter from Minister of Culture and National Heritage Hanna Wróblewska; Sylwia Tryc, Acting Director of the National Institute of Polish Cultural Heritage Abroad – POLONIKA; and Mateusz Szpytma, Deputy President of the Institute of National Remembrance. The day concluded with a screening of the film “Polish Cathedrals” by Magdalena Gutowska, accompanied by live music performed by Jazz Trio: Sławek Bielawiec, Krzysztof Pabian, and Dave Zieliński. Their performance was generously sponsored by the Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union.

September 26, 2024 (Thursday)

September 26 saw Polish language presentations dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino, the Warsaw Uprising, and other significant national anniversaries.

1. Pietro Rogacień, Fundacja Muzeum Pamięci 2 Korpusu Polskiego we Włoszech / Foundation for the Memorial Museum of the 2nd Polish Corp in Monte Cassino: *80. rocznica bitwy o Monte Cassino [80th anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino]*
2. Dr Dobrosława Platt, Biblioteka Polska POSK w Londynie / Polish Library POSK in London: *Bitwa o Monte Cassino w fotografiach ze zbiorów Biblioteki Polskiej POSK w Londynie [The Battle of Monte Cassino in photographs from the collection of the Polish Library POSK in London]*
3. Prof. Krystyna Jaworska, Fundacja Rzymska im. J. Z. Umiastowskiej / J. Z. Umiastowska Roman Foundation: *Fundacja Umiastowska ku pamięci 80 rocznicy bitwy o Monte Cassino: publikacje, konferencja i wystawa [Umiastowska Foundation in memory of the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino: publications, conference and exhibition]*
4. Jadwiga Kowalska, Archiwum Polskiej Misji Katolickiej w Anglii i Walii / Archive of the Polish Catholic Mission in England and Wales: *Polska nekropolia na włoskiej ziemi. Cmentarz Monte Cassino w dokumentach Archiwum Polskiej Misji Katolickiej z Anglii i Walii [Polish necropolis on Italian soil. Monte Cassino Cemetery in the documents of the Archive of the Polish Catholic Mission from England and Wales]*
5. Anna Stefanicka, Instytut Piłsudskiego w Londynie / Pilsudski Institute in London: *Wańkowicz i Monte Cassino [Wańkowicz and Monte Cassino]*
6. Dr Iwona Korga, Instytut Józefa Piłsudskiego w Ameryce / Jozef Pilsudski Institute of America: *Powstanie Warszawskie w zbiorach Instytutu Piłsudskiego w Ameryce [The Warsaw Uprising in the Collection of the Pilsudski Institute of America]*
7. Dr Jacek Barski, Porta Polonica - Centrum Dokumentacji Kultury i Historii Polaków w Niemczech / Porta Polonica Documentation Center for the Culture and History of the Poles in Germany: *Józef Feliks Gawlina (1892-1964). Legendarny polski duszpasterz i biskup w Niemczech [Józef Feliks Gawlina (1892-1964). Legendary Polish priest and bishop in Germany]*
8. Halina Misterka, Muzeum Polskie w Ameryce / Polish Museum of America: *Krystyna Zakrzewska Obuchowicz (1924-2013) – dziewczęce marzenia i realia życia po upadku Powstania Warszawskiego [Krystyna Zakrzewska Obuchowicz (1924-2013) – a girl's dreams and the realities of life after the fall of the Warsaw Uprising]*
9. Edyta Targońska, Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie/ State Archives in Lublin: *Spuścizna dokumentacyjna Rady Polonii Amerykańskiej w zasobie archiwum Muzeum Polskiego w Ameryce [The documentary legacy of American Relief for Poland in the Archives of the Polish Museum of America]*
10. Radosław Pawłowski, Muzeum Tadeusza Kościuszki w Solurze, Archiwum Akt Nowych / Kosciuszko Museum in Solothurn, Archives of Modern Records: *Solurskie pamiątki po Tadeuszu Kościuszcze ocalałe z hekatomby II wojny światowej i Powstania Warszawskiego [Solothurn memorabilia of Tadeusz Kościuszko saved from the hecatomb of World War II and the Warsaw Uprising]*
11. Teofil Lachowicz, Stowarzyszenie Weteranów Armii Polskiej w Ameryce / Polish Army Veterans' Association in America: *Amerykańskie losy weteranów Powstania Listopadowego 1830-1831. W 190. rocznicę przybycia do Nowego Jorku grupy 234 powstańców listopadowych [The American fate of veterans of the November Uprising 1830-1831. On the 190th anniversary of the arrival of a group of 234 November insurgents in New York]*
12. Stefan Władysiuk, Polski Instytut Naukowy w Kanadzie i Biblioteka im. Wandy Stachiewicz / Polish Institute of Arts & Sciences in Canada - Wanda Stachiewicz Polish Library: *Od Wisły, do rzeki św. Wawrzyńca, aż po jezioro Michigan. Kolekcja grafiki polskiej z wystawy światowej 1939 w Nowym Jorku w zbiorach Biblioteki Polskiej w Montrealu [From the Vistula River, to the St. Lawrence River, to Lake Michigan. Collection of Polish prints from the 1939 World's Fair in New York in the collection of the Polish Library in Montreal]*

13. Elisabeth Walle, Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu / Polish Library in Paris: *Biblioteka cyfrowa Francja-Polska: czyli jak promować historię i kulturę Polski w kraju i za granicą [France-Poland Digital Library: how to promote the history and culture of Poland at home and abroad]*
14. Prof. dr hab. Zdzisław Pietrzyk, Uniwersytet Jagielloński / Jagiellonian University: *Materiały rodzinne Wołłowiczów w Muzeum Polskim w Rapperswilu [Wołłowicz family materials in the Polish Museum in Rapperswil]*

Following these presentations, participants engaged in discussions with representatives from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the National Library, the Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance, and National Institute of Polish Cultural Heritage Abroad – POLONIKA.

In the afternoon, participants embarked on an enriching tour of Chicago, visiting historic sites significant to the Polish community. The tour started at the Church of St. Stanislaus Kostka, the oldest Polish church in Chicago, followed by a visit to the former seat of the Polish National Alliance. Other key stops included the Polish Triangle, in the area known as the Polish Downtown, the Chopin Theater, and the former headquarters of the Polish Women’s Alliance. The group also visited Humboldt Park, a gathering place for Polonia events for decades, where Ignacy Paderewski spoke at a manifestation on Poland gaining independence. A wonderful stop on the tour was the history-filled Church of St. John Cantius, where Brother Joshua guided the group, impressing visitors with his knowledge and dedication. The group also learned many interesting facts from the event coordinators, Małgorzata Kot and Richard Owsiany. A drive through the streets of Chicago, along Michigan Avenue with views of the Congress Hotel where Paderewski stayed when visiting Chicago, included a longer stop on Solidarity Drive, where the guests were joined by the knowledgeable and enthusiastic Daniel Pogorzelski. Participants admired the city’s skyline, strolled past the monuments of Kościuszko and Copernicus, and took a group photo while contemplating the meaningful sculpture, “Agora” by Magdalena Abakanowicz, creating lasting memories of this beautiful city and the Polish presence within it.

The day ended with a formal dinner hosted by Vice Consul Agata Grochowska at the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland, featuring a presentation by Marek Żebrowski of the Polish Music Center at USC Thornton Los Angeles, CA, on the works of Henryk Wars and Feliks Konarski. Guests concluded the evening by singing along to hits by these iconic artists.

September 27, 2024 (Friday) – Closing Sessions

The final day of the conference included closed sessions, during which participants discussed future resolutions for MAB and finalized plans for upcoming conferences. The event concluded with a farewell cruise along Chicago’s river and lake, offering a picturesque backdrop for participants to reflect on the meaningful exchanges and new connections formed throughout the conference. This memorable cruise was generously sponsored by PRCUA, PMA, Idea Furniture, as well as PMA Board members Betty Uzarowicz, Vicki Granacki, and Stephen Kusmierczak.

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Polish Library POSK (London)
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Polish Museum of America (Chicago)
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Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (Chicago)
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Tadeusz Kościuszko Museum (Solothurn)

Closing Remarks

The MAB Conference demonstrated the strength of international collaboration in preserving and promoting Polish cultural heritage. We look forward to building on the connections made during this prestigious event, continuing our shared mission to safeguard and celebrate Polish history and culture worldwide. We are also pleased to announce that the 47th MAB Conference will take place in Rome in 2025, and we eagerly anticipate the event.

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